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JULY 1984

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JAYAWARDENE APPEALS TO U.S.

'DON'T HELP TAMILS'

'The President of Sri Lanka took a baby elephant with him as a gift to President Reagan and brought forth the mouse' was the cynical comment made by a well-informed columnist who had first-hand knowledge of the low-key attention given to Jayawardene by the American administration during his recent visit to the United States. His visit to the UK was less publicised and received only marginal reference in the British media.

Before his departure to the US, Mr Jayawardene, not known for his humility, pompously declared that he was going at the invitation of the President of the most powerful country in the world. Within the US itself, the Sri Lankan embassy mounted an expensive publicity and advertising campaign to bolster up Jayawardene's visit. The *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal* carried double-page advertisements.

Whoever thought that this type of self-induced publicity would help cover up the gross violations of human rights and the atrocities committed against the Tamil people must have been badly disappointed. On the eve of the President's arrival, Amnesty International released its latest 60-page report documenting in detail the several extrajudicial executions carried out by his security forces. The Tamils of USA had managed to collect sufficient money to put out a half-page advertisement under the title 'Holocaust of Tamils in Sri Lanka — Island of Tears'.

The large government sponsored advertisements helped only to draw attention to the small counter advertisements by the US Tamils which did not fail to document the atrocities committed against the Tamil people of Sri Lanka.

With almost evangelical fervour, the President delved into his now familiar theme of 'international terrorism' which he had successfully imported into Sri Lanka with his invitation to the Israeli Mossad. The more he referred to 'Tamil terrorism', the more he was questioned about Tamil grievances and the violation of human rights in Sri Lanka. The additional unnerving factor was the pickets and protest demonstrations which he had to encounter both in the US and the UK.

Although Sri Lanka is only a dot in the world map, Jayawardene always

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Dr Rajasundaram

FOR MEN LIKE HIM THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A MEMORIAL

Fifty-three Tamils achieved martyrdom on July 25 and 27, 1983. They were brutally killed by the death squads of the Sri Lankan government within the maximum security prison in Colombo as part of the genocidal attack on the Tamils in July 1983.

We salute and honour the memory of these 53 martyrs who paid the supreme sacrifice on behalf of the Tamil people. Of the 53, Dr S. Rajasundaram deserves special mention and we quote Dr David Selbourne who was his friend:

'But of all the crimes of July, the most wicked single event — though it

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JULY 1984

THEY SHALL BE FREE

The failure on the part of President Jayawardene of Sri Lanka to condemn the violence in July 1983 when 'Tamils were beaten, hacked or burned to death in the streets, on buses and on trains . . . in many parts of the island . . . and their houses and shops were burned and looted', and also his failure to 'see fit to utter one single word of sympathy for the victims of the violence and the destruction', was described by Mr Paul Sieghart of the International Commission of Jurists as 'a misjudgment of monumental proportions'. Far from being a misjudgment, the reaction of the President then was a calculated, conscious and deliberate act of omission.

How could one have expected the President to act otherwise when the violence unleashed upon the Tamil people was masterminded, planned, organised and executed with menacing military precision by goon squads owing allegience to several government ministers and by substantial sections of the security forces? That is why, despite the demand from all international human rights bodies, and in complete but not uncharacteristic breach of the undertaking given to the United Nations Sub-Commission on Human Rights, the government has persistently refused to order an impartial inquiry into the July 1983 violence.

That is why the gruesome slaughter of 53 Tamil detainees in a Colombo jail on July 25 and 27 last year, as part of the state-sponsored pogrom against the Tamil people, still remains uninvestigated. That is why not a single member of the Sri Lankan security forces who participated in the July 1983 carnage and destruction has faced any prosecution. And that is why Ministers and MPs who, in July 1983, went about inciting the mobs in the streets with exhortations of 'Jayaweva', continue to hold positions of power.

Not content with the havoc and destruction wrought upon the Tamil people in July 1983, the government has continued with its diabolical plan to subjugate the Tamil people with mass arrests, torture and killing of hundreds of Tamil civilians. Presidential threats of 'the end of the Tamils' and 'repetition of July 1983' have become as frequent as they are menacing.

The so-called Round Table Conference with the professed aim of a negotiated settlement of the ethnic problem was only a ruse to buy time to consolidate the President's shaky position following the chaos of July 1983. The deliberate and inexplicable postponement of the RTC without any serious or meaningful steps being taken and rejecting the 'good offices' of the Indian Government (which was earlier welcome) during the President's recent visit to New Delhi, where he claimed that the 'Tamil problem' was a purely internal matter, clearly demonstrate that the Jayawardene government was never serious about meeting the legitimate grievances of the Tamil people.

'What are their grievances' is the rhetorical question Jayawardene is reported to have asked a correspondent in London when the latter raised the question as to how he proposed to meet Tamil grievances! Jayawardene is the man who in 1977 in his election manifesto identified four areas of Tamil grievances which gave rise to the demand for a separate Tamil state. He is the man who led the leaders of the Tamil United Liberation Front up the garden path for two long years of tea parties, having interminable discussions about 'Tamil grievances'.

He is the man who agreed to the 'Annexure C' with the Indian Prime Minister, setting out proposals for meeting 'Tamil grievances' including the setting up of regional councils for Tamil areas. Now he goes to London and asks a foreign reporter 'What are the grievances of the Tamils'! This man cannot be trusted. He is a political cheat like all other Sinhala leaders who preceded him since 1948.

In August 1983, we commented editorially: 'To the Tamil people of Sri Lanka, the conduct of the President has come as no surprise. Such back-tracking and breach of faith are characteristic of Mr Jayawardene or for that matter, of all previous Sri Lankan governments. Betrayed time and time again, very few Tamils can possibly harbour any more illusions . . . The current prevarication and dilly-dallying by the President . . . are in full accord with the reputation that successive Sri Lankan governments have built over the years that they can never be trusted. The Tamil people of Sri Lanka knew it all along. India and the world will come to realise this soon, if they have not done so already'.

These words sound prophetic in the context of the current conduct of President Jayawardene. But they also reflect the experience of the Tamil people at the hands of Sinhala leaders for decades.

Jayawardene, under whom state terrorism has reached new heights in Sri Lanka, raised the banner of 'fighting against international terrorism' during his recent visit to the United States. He made speeches soothing to the ears of President Reagan from whom Jayawardene expected support to fight the Tamils, describing them as 'terrorists'.

But the recent outbreak of violence in the South of the country — attacks on police stations, setting ablaze courthouses, student unrest leading to the attacking and burning of public service vehicles following police brutality against university students — is an indicator of the crisis which is very much close to his Presidential Palace. He may soon have to send his emissaries round the world seeking help to 'fight

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'DON'T HELP TAMILS' — Jayawardene

FROM PAGE 1

talks big. He referred to himself as the 103rd Head of State of Sri Lanka. When it came to questions such as democracy, treatment of Tamils and human rights, his characteristic hypocrisy and technique of doublespeak and doublethink were truly revealing.

The President described Sri Lanka as a five-star democracy where there was universal franchise, concealing the fact that, in his five-star democracy, the life of the elected parliament had been extended for a further period of six years without an election and that nearly a million Tamils still remain deprived of citizenship or voting rights.

Characterising all the Tamils of Sri Lanka who seek entry into Western countries as supporters of 'terrorists', the President appealed to the governments of these countries not to help the Tamils by admitting them. Although deprived of educational and employment opportunities because of the racial discrimination practised in Sri Lanka and subjected to frequent bouts of mob violence, the Tamils should not be admitted into Western countries, according to Mr Jayawardene.

Motives

The motives of the President were clear for all to see. He wants the Tamils to be isolated and contained within Sri Lanka so that they can be suppressed and subjugated without the world knowing about it. Sri Lankan Tamils living abroad have become a thorn in the flesh of the President's scheme of things.

In the same breath as he appealed not to help the Tamils, the President cited the examples of his Inspector-General of Police, the Attorney-General and a Senior Judge being Tamils, in an effort to show that there was no discrimination against Tamils in Sri Lanka.

He repeated this in London and New Delhi. He monotonously repeats this everywhere in Sri Lanka. For a President to cite three or four Tamils holding such positions almost in the evening of their careers after years of service in their chosen professions, is really to scrape the barrel.

The fact the IGP is a Tamil is neither here nor there. The fact is that over 90 per cent of the 17,000-strong police are Sinhalese;; almost 98 per cent of the country's armed forces are Sinhalese personnel.

The fact that there is only one Tamil in a senior position in the judiciary only demonstrates that there is discrimination against Tamils. The fact that the President is able to cite only three or four examples of Tamils holding senior positions in a country where three million Tamils live, is in itself concrete proof of the extent of racial discrimination. The fact that the Tamil IGP and the AG had to take cover during the July 1983 violence, in spite of the 'powerful' positions they held only reveals the pitiable plight in which these gentlemen find themselves. The only purpose they serve is to be displayed as showpieces by a racist regime to cover up its naked discrimination against the Tamils.

The President went all the way from Colombo to Washington to tell the US Foreign Affairs Committee members that 'Sinhalese have no other place to live other than Sri Lanka'. What other place do the Sri Lankan Tamils or Muslims have other than Sri Lanka to live?

Was Mr Jayawardene suggesting that the Muslims of Sri Lanka could go to one of the Middle Eastern countries and Tamils to South India and leave Sri Lanka for the Sinhalese only? Sinhalese are living in various countries, including USA, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, etc., having acquired citizenship and permanent rights of settlement in those countries, with property and business interests.

They have even established Buddhist temples with 'Sinhala-Buddhist' priests brought from Sri Lanka! Not that the President is ignorant of these facts, but he was only making a feeble attempt to justify the suppression of the legitimate rights of the Tamil people.

'Separatist cause'

In London, the President told the Press that he was going to ask the British Prime Minister to take action against those Tamils who were aiding the separatist cause and 'terrorism' in Sri Lanka. What in fact Mr Jayawardene was seeking was to suppress the Sri Lankan Tamils wherever they lived.

With the help of all the arms he could get, with the assistance of SAS mercenaries and the Mossad, with draconian laws and a state of permanent emergency, and through state-sponsored pogroms at periodic and frequent intervals, Mr Jayawardene could hope to suppress and subjugate the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

But he has no power over those Tamils living abroad and they have become a serious problem, for they actively engage in exposing the murder of innocent Tamil civilians, the destruction of their property, the torture, incommunicado detention and other violations of human rights.

So Mr Jayawardene raises the spectre of 'terrorism' and 'Marxism' and wants Western governments to shut them up. What about those Sinhalese racist groups, particularly in the UK, like the Sinhala Association and Sinhala Bala Mandalaya who are going round collecting thousands and thousands of pounds to 'fight the Tamils'. If the Sinhala Buddhists do such things, it is called 'patriotism' but if Tamils do it, it is called 'aiding terrorism'.

SHATTERING OF AN ILLUSION

I was in Colombo on 26 July when the usual announcement by Air Lanka, the country's only airline, put out its blurb, 'Visit Sri Lanka: A Taste of Paradise'. This advertisement, with pictures of the brand new hotels with expanses of beach and ocean and tables overflowing with lobsters and tropical fruits, routinely appears on national television, except that on this occasion the advertisement was not quite in good taste: the paradise isle was in flames, the houses and business establishments of the minority Tamil commmunity were being systematically burnt and looted by well-organised mobs belonging largely to the lumpen proletariats of the cities and small towns of Sri Lanka.

Brutality

'The brutality was unbelievable: homes and shops were burnt, cars were doused with gasoline and lit, sometimes with the occupants inside: some people were hacked to death, others burnt alive. Thirty-five political prisoners were killed by irate regulars in the country's maximum security prison.

'The next day seventeen more were slaughtered in the same manner. There was a total breakdown of law and order in the nation that had been touted by foreign governments as the model of stability, the apogee of free enterprise. A few days and the illusion was shattered: the house of cards had crumbled.'

From *Political Violence and Future of Democracy* by Gananath Obeyesekera, Professor of Anthropology at Princeton University, USA.

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THE JULY 1983 SRI LANKAN MASSACRE

The build-up of communal tensions between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils which culminated in the massacre of over 2,000 Tamils in July 1983 has put the entire future of Sri Lanka in doubt. Foreign investment and tourism on which the country relies so heavily have been dealt a blow from which neither is likely to recover in the foreseeable future.

Since the underlying problems have not been settled, a resurgence of violence is likely to occur. Unless the rest of the world is made aware of what is going on, it is unlikely that the Sri Lankan government will take the necessary steps which might make it possible to avert another bloodbath.

Who was behind the systematic and well-organised destruction of Tamil property and why so many lives (almost all of them Tamil) were lost is still unknown. Indeed, the most striking aspect of the holocaust is not that it occurred but that 10 months have now gone by and there has been no attempt by the Sri Lankan government to identify those responsible for a week that cost at least 2,000 Tamil lives and extensive destruction of their property and put 100,000 in refugee camps in the worst racial bloodbath the country has known.

The background

At least four factors have played a major role in what has been regarded as a purely racial problem.

The economic situation

An inherited stagnant economy and mismanagement by successive Sri Lankan governments has resulted in serious economic difficulty and spiralling unemployment.

It is a feature of the human race that in times of economic difficulty, they turn their insecurity on those of a different race, religion or colour which, in the Sri Lankan context, is the majority Sinhalese turning on the minority Tamils.

When these feelings are fanned by unscrupulous politicians, some of the Buddhist clergy and extremists, all that is needed is a spark to start an explosion.

The breakdown of law and order

The Bandaranaike regime (1957) saw the start of the deterioration of law and order. His idea of socialism was to allow the local thugs and hooligans to do as they wished, thus replacing law and order with the rule of the political thug.

By Dr Brian Senewiratne*

Crime was not followed by punishment but by political interference and the power of the law was replaced by the power of the politician. The courts were put in a subordinate position and the Chief Justice has complained about 'the erosian of the judiciary through executive action'. The stage was set for uncontrollable mob violence.

Crisis in political integrity and media integrity

There has been a serious downturn in political integrity since Independence, especially since the late nineteen fifties. When defeat in Parliament or at an election seemed imminent, the Bandaranaikes extended their term by proroguing Parliament and Jayawardene simply decided that an election was not necessary! If a referendum is a suitable alternative to an election, the latter would not be in the Constitution. Such actions may give the government longer life, but they have an unsettling effect on the country.

The main role of the government-controlled media has been the propagation of half-truths and one-sided stories which have an inflammatory effect.

The racial problem itself

The three main factors in the racial problem have been highly discriminatory laws such as Bandaranaike's 'Sinhala Only' Act which adversely affected the employment prospects of Tamils, Mrs Bandaranaike's 'standardisation' for university entrants which had a highly discriminatory effect on Tamil youth seeking tertiary education and the consistent failure of successive Sinhalese dominated governments to either develop the Tamil-speaking areas or to enable the District Development Councils to function effectively.

Attempts by Sinhalese politicians to accommodate the Tamils have met with opposition by extremists in their own camp and the Buddhist clergy. The Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact which, if implemented, would have been a major step forward in race relations, was sabotaged by none other than Jayawardene, then in opposition. Can he seriously expect the Tamils to trust him now after this act of sheer Sinhalese chauvinism? This combination of factors has pushed the Tamils into demanding a separate State, and a section of their youth into violence.

The July 1983 violence

The most outstanding feature of the violence was that within hours of its eruption, there was clear and unequivocal evidence of organisation. The scheduled burial with pomp and pageantry of thirteen soldiers killed in the ambush was a serious error of judgment if not a deliberate attempt to incite the Sinhala masses.

In the initial outburst of the night of 24th July, which could be attributed to mob violence, the feature that stands out is that Jayawardene, with his capital aflame, failed to declare a curfew. Rather than deliberate inactivity, it is possible that the situation was too overpowering for the 78-year-old President.

The following morning, people not normally resident in Colombo were transported to the city and began a systematic destruction of Tamil lives and property. Who sent them and who authorised the use of government vehicles for their transport have not been settled but invites speculation very damaging to the government and some of its ministers.

The prepared lists of Tamil property which they carried, could not have been made, nor could the systematic methods of destruction used have been learned overnight.

After the Colombo destruction, there was a progressive destruction of Tamil lives and property in a very definitely organised 'march' in sequential fashion from Kandy to the towns in the tea estate areas.

Jayawardene's silence during the four days of violence was deafening. When he finally did appear on television, his address to the nation was no more than an apology to the Sinhalese people for not proscribing the TULF. Not a word of concern was expressed at the devastation of Tamil lives and property.

If ever there was a tactless and unstatesmanlike address by an leader at a time of national crisis, this was it. To say that the Tamils have lost confidence in Jayawardene and his Ministers would be an understatement.

The government must carry full responsibility for the two massacres of Tamils held in the Welikada goal for whose safety they were responsible.

The resurgence of violence in Colombo on Friday 29th July has also not been explained. Jayawardene's fai-

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lure to enquire into who was responsible for the July 1983 violence as he did after the 1977 violence (the Sansoni Commission), despite an undertaking given to a United Nations Subcommittee that he would do so, is as damning as anything such an enquiry could unearth.

During the massive destruction of life and property, the armed forces and police did nothing and in many instances assisted the mobs by supplying them with petrol.

This underscores once again that during times of national violence, the Security Forces of Sri Lanka are only for the security of a section of the population, i.e. the Sinhalese people.

The Tamil massacre would have been much more comprehensive had it not been for the bravery of more civilised Sinhalese who literally hid Tamils in their homes, running terrible risks themselves.

The aftermath

There have been serious repercussions both at home and abroad.

The damage done to the economy by Tamil professionals and industrialists leaving Sri Lanka in droves cannot yet be assessed fully. It would be naive to believe that these businessmen will reinvest in this volatile country.

Tourism has suffered a devastating blow and many hotels face bankruptcy.

The Sri Lankan image abroad has taken its worst beating in history. More damaging than anything a Sri Lankan Tamil abroad can say are publications by the International Commission of Jurists, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, the World Council of Churches and Amnesty International, which have come out with blistering reports about the violation of human rights in Sri Lanka.

The last named has also repeatedly requested the withdrawal of laws that enable the Security Forces to perpetrate torture and murder without fear of investigation.

Government attempts to win the propaganda war by listing members of the Security Forces killed, have not made a major impact. If men don uniforms, equip themselves with sophisticated weapons and get killed in the process, is it a cause for complaint or justification for turning their guns on the Tamil community in Jaffna who have nothing to do with the violence of a section of their youth?

The continuing security of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka is in considerable doubt. Jayawardene's statement that he cannot guarantee the safety of the Tamils in Colombo if there is a threat from India, has been justifiably criticised by the Chief Justice whom the President has threatened with impeachment.

Lawlessness

If Jayawardene cannot guarantee the safety of his citizens, he should quit his position instead of promoting lawlessness, embarrassing the legislature and pushing democracy into totalitarianism.

The current problem is the indiscriminate killing of innocent Tamils, in particular the Tamil youth in Jaffna by the armed forces in the hope that some of them may be terrorists. The terrorists they are after are probably watching their activities from South India. If and when they retaliate, there will be a bloodbath that would make the July 1983 massacre seem trivial.

The most worrying prospect is the potential for internationalisation of this domestic conflict. America is already assisting the Sri Lankan armed forces which may be advance payment for the strategic naval base in Trincomalee.

India, by sending her Foreign Minister at the height of the trouble, has made her presence felt and will feel threatened by the American presence in Trincomalee. South India is turning a blind eye to the militant youth training there. To internationalise the situation would be to turn Sri Lanka into another Lebanon.

Grandiose view

The author is neither a Tamil Tiger terrorist nor a chauvinist Sinhalese with the grandiose view that Sri Lanka belongs only to the Sinhalese. He does not support the guerrilla terrorism of the Tigers, the military terrorism of the Security Forces or the political terrorism of Sri Lankan governments present or past with their political dishonesty. His only concern is the stopping of violence in Sri Lanka. Historically, no conflict has been settled by terrorism.

If a division of the country will bring peace to Sri Lanka, this will be more acceptable to the author, a full-blooded Sinhalese, than an internal conflict that could go on for decades with a massive loss of life and property and total disruption of the country.

* Dr Brian Senewiratne, MA., MBB Chir. (Cantab), MD. FRCP. (Lond.), FRACP. Consultant Physician, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane, Australia.

REMEMBER
JULY 1983
MASSACRE OF TAMILS
IN SRI LANKA

2,000 murdered . . .
100,000 made homeless
53 political prisoners
slaughtered in the cells
Mass arrests & torture

FIGHT PRESIDENT JAYAWARDENE'S REIGN OF TERROR

Demonstration

SAT 28 JULY 84

Assemble 12.30
HYDE PARK

RALLY at TRAFALGAR SQUARE

Eelam Solidarity Campaign

DEVANESAN NESIAH LEAVES FOR USA

Jaffna's Government Agent, Mr Devanesan Nesiah left for the USA at the end of last month. He is the recipient of a John F. Kennedy Memorial Scholarship to follow a post-graduate course in Public Administration at Harvard.

It was expected that Mr N. Vamadeva, a former Commissioner of the Marketing Department, would succeed him. Meanwhile, Additional GA, Jaffna, Mr M. Panchalingam is acting for GA, Jaffna.

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A PARADISE, BUT . . .

Notes from the diary of Mr Mark Fisher, MP for Stoke in the UK Parliament. Mr Fisher recently visited Sri Lanka, along with several other MPs, as an invitee of the Sri Lankan government

All the brochures and magazines in the plan describe Sri Lanka as an island paradise.

They are right. Or would be, if it were not for the killings and riots of the last twelve months, in which thousands of Tamils have died and tens of thousands have seen their homes burnt, their businesses destroyed and their families in refugee camps.

There are long beaches of white sand, fringed by palm trees; enormously friendly and courteous people; a riot of tropical flowers everywhere; strange and delicious fruits, papaya and mango; the sound of cicadas and exotic coloured birds.

And soldiers and policemen all around with loaded rifles.

Our programme is packed from the moment we step out of the plane. Separate meetings with all the senior government ministers and with every shade of opposition opinion, Parliamentary, banned Tamil MPs, civil rights leaders, academics, clergy, judges, newspaper editors, released political prisoners. To their credit the government allow us, indeed help us, to see everyone and everything that we want.

The picture that emerges is grim. Both the government and the Tamils agree that the Tamil grievances can only be finally solved by a political solution, devolving more powers to the Tamil area, and not by military action on either side.

But the common ground for such a solution, between the most that the government will offer and the least that the Tamils will accept, is narrow and fragile. And time is short.

'Army of occupation'

Every week that passes makes such a solution more difficult as the actions of the government's 'army of occupation' in the Tamil areas daily harden Tamil fears and distrust, and the actions of the tamil Tiger groups lead to further army retaliation. A vicious circle of violence and fear exists.

We travel to the Tamil areas of Jaffna and Trincomalee in a tiny plane. My fear of flying is not helped by the sight, as we sit waiting for take-off, of a lad running over with a pair of steps and a screwdriver, jumping on to the wing and screwing down half a dozen rivets!

In Jaffna we are given details of numerous abuses by the army. The torture of suspects, using pythons and cobras; midnight snatches; no inquests after deaths, with bodies being burnt; the 'disappearance' of Tamils for months at a time with no information of prison, charge or condition being given to relatives.

I am here to see the family of Shan, a Tamil living in Stoke whom the Home Office wants to send home with his wife and three-year-old daughter.

I visit Shan's family and village (only a mile from the market place where armed forces shot down nine people in March, including a pregnant woman) and learn from them what it feels like to be living in a constant state of anxiety and fear.

Back in Colombo we have a long session with the President. He is an intelligent and impressive man, walking a tightrope between satisfying Tamil grievances (and possibly provoking a Sinhalese backlash and more riots) and refusing them, thus pushing Tamils further into the arms of the Tigers.

Already every Tamil in the northern province, including senior Tamil government officials, refers to the Tigers as 'the boys' and sees them as the one sure defence against an undisciplined army.

I fly out two days before the rest of the delegation, to get back to the Finance Bill Committee. It will need a political miracle to prevent an escalation of events in Sri Lanka which will lead inevitably to further government infringements of civil rights, more totalitarian government and more repressive legislation.

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SECOND WORLD TAMIL CONVENTION

The Second International Tamil Convention has resolved to create an organisation at international level to secure the rights of the Tamil people. It has also called for an impartial inquiry into the violation of the rights of Sri Lanka Tamils in recent times. In a resolution, the conference called upon the various Tamil political groups in Sri Lanka to unite in their struggle against the Jayawardene government.

The most remarkable aspect of the Conference was the participation of delegates from Tamil Nadu from all political parties. Among the participants from Tamil Nadu were **Mr K. Rajaram**, MLA and Speaker of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly representing the AIDMK; **Era Anbarasu**, MP and Convenor of Tamil Nadu Congress (I) representing the ruling Congress (I); **Era Janarthanam**, MLA and President of World Tamil Youth Federation, representing AIDMK; **T. Gopalasamy**, MP representing the DMK; His Holiness **Sri Gnanasambanda Desika Swamikal**, Aadheenakarthar, Madurai Aadheenam; **T.P. Radhakrishnan**, Legal Adviser to DMK representing the DMK; **Senchi Ramachandran**, MLA representing the DMK; **P. Nedumaran**, MP and President of Kamaraj Congress; **K.**

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Veeramani, Secretary-General of Dravida Kalagam; **A.S. Manavaithamby**, President of Malaiaga Thamilar Maruvalvu Kalagam; **A.K. Jainudeen**, MP representing the Janjivan Ram Congress; **K.R. Ramasamy**, President, Dravida Kalagam, Malaysia and **Dr V.M. Sethuraman**.

The bringing together of representatives of such diverse and rival groupings of Tamil Nadu and seeing them appearing and speaking with one voice on the problems facing the Tamil people of Sri Lanka is an achievement in itself for which the Convenors of the Convention, and particularly Dr Winston Panchacharam, the brain behind the Convention, deserve unreserved congratulations.

An impressive and well-documented Souvenir entitled 'The Story of Tamil Eelam' was published and distributed to mark the holding of the Convention. A rare but forthright article for a Sinhala Buddhist to write appears in the Souvenir.

This article entitled 'The July 1983 Sri Lankan Massacre' is by Dr Brian Senewiratne, presently of Brisbane, Australia. The concluding sentence of his article is most revealing: 'If a division of the country will bring peace to Sri Lanka, this will be more acceptable to the author, a full-blooded Sinhalese, than an internal conflict that could go on for decades with a massive loss of life and property and total disruption of the country.'

Resolutions adopted

The Convention resolved to establish a Tamil International and for this purpose elected a five-member working group to undertake the detailed organisational tasks. The Tamil International will have the following objectives:

a. to secure the physical well-being of the Tamil people because physical existence provides the base for all human action;

b. to secure the cultural identity of the Tamil people because their culture is a rich and ancient culture and because it is a culture which has much to give to the world;

c. to secure the human rights of the Tamil people because these are rights which spring from the inherent dignity of man and the Tamil people seek

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NEWS BLACKOUT ON 'MOSSAD' ACTIVITIES

The government of Sri Lanka has banned the publication of any 'material relating to the Sri Lanka-Israeli issue' as part of a comprehensive censorship of news in the country.

The ban has been imposed under Section 14 of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (an Act which is an ugly blot on the statute book of any civilised country according to the International Commission of Jurists), which refers to material that will cause religious, racial or communal disharmony or feelings of ill-will or hostility between the different communities or religious groups.

This section has never been invoked before, even in the face of the most sustained and vicious anti-Tamil racist propaganda carried on by sections of the media, certain political dignatories or extremist sections of the Buddhist clergy.

The government's recent announcement of the opening of the 'Israeli interests section' in Colombo, after the severance of diplomatic relations with Israel 14 years ago, sparked off widespread opposition in Sri Lanka, particularly among the country's seven per cent Muslim population.

The government had sought and obtained the services of personnel from Mossad, the Israeli Secret Service, to work with the Sri Lankan security forces to combat what they describe as 'Tamil terrorism'.

Several Muslim organisations, the Tamil-Muslim United Front and other opposition parties have strongly condemned the government's move, and the government's action to ban news relating to the 'Israeli connection' represents an attempt to arrest and contain the growing opposition.

The use by the government of the provisions of the Prevention of Terorrism Act, which had hitherto been applied against the Tamils, for the purpose of imposing this has brought home to many Sinhalese people the truth that the government would not hesitate to apply the full force of the draconian provisions of the Act to suppress all opposition.

JAYAWARDENE'S 'FIVE STAR DEMOCRACY'

'We are a Five Star Democracy . . . Our strongest bond is the mutual commitment to democracy. Modern democracy in Sri Lanka is fifty years old', declared the Dharmista (Righteous and Just) President of Sri Lanka, Mr J.R. Jayawardene, during his recent visit to the United States.

People have heard of Five Star hotels and Four Star petrol. Never of a Five Star democracy. No wonder Mr Jayawardene's listeners were bewildered. But Sri Lanka is unique and particularly its politicians in power.

Let us examine some of the ingredients that go to constitute Jayawardene's Five Star democracy:

★ The leader of the country's largest opposition party (and a former Prime Minister at that) and several others banned from political and parliamentary life by the imposition of civic disabilities.

★ Five racial pogroms against the country's Tamil population since July 1977 when Mr Jayawardene came to power.

★ Private armies of politicians in power going about violently attacking opposition parties and trade unions and breaking up their meetings while forces of law and order turn a blind eye.

★ Disenfranchise and deprive three million Tamils of any political representation in parliament or local bodies by the enactment of the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution.

★ Overruling of Supreme Court judgments by Constitutional amendments.

★ Extend the life of parliament elected for six years to twelve years without election and by constitutional amendment.

★ Arrest and detain opposition politicians on trumped-up charges and later release them after the government's purposes have been achieved.

★ Use of torture and incommunicado detention and a licence to the security forces to carry out extrajudicial execution of Tamils.

★ Open police stations in University campuses to suppress student activity.

★ Claim to have 50 years of universal adult franchise while continuing the deprivation of nationality, citizenship and franchise to a million Tamils.

★ Muzzling the press with rigorous and frequent censorship.

★ Ban opposition parties and newspapers under Emergency rule.

★ Promotion of police officers found guilty by the courts.

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'CRIME OF GENOCIDE IS NO INTERNAL MATTER' — Australian MPs

Two Australian Members of Parliament, Mr Lewis Kent and Mr Hollis, have raised the question of the violence against Tamils of Sri Lanka in the Australian Parliament. On two separate occasions, Mr Kent on May 7 and Mr Hollis on May 31, raised the question, taking up the position that the genocidal attacks on the Tamil people of Sri Lanka could no longer be regarded as only an internal matter. Both these MPs attended a Human Rights Conference on Sri Lanka recently held in Madras.

The following is the text of their speeches:

Mr Kent (Hotham): During Easter I attended an international conference in Madras hosted by the Chief Minister of the Tamil Nadu government. The conference was opened by the Speaker of the State Assembly and its purpose was to discuss the sad plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka. People of very diverse political opinion like my colleague the honourable member for Macarthur – (Mr Hollis), a Conservative member of Parliament, from West Germany, a Canadian jurist, a Norwegian human rights activist and I, just to mention a few, assembled at short notice thousands of miles from our homelands in response to a call to oppose racial violence and to defend the human rights of the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka.

Raise our voices

'There was no other reason or motive to abandon our Easter holidays with our families but to raise our voices against the genocide perpetrated on Tamils by the government of Sri Lanka. Both my colleague and I went to Madras to express Australia's horror and revulsion at the racial violence and the continuing persecution and killing of Tamils.

'We raised our voices against killings, unlawful imprisonment and torture of Tamils because these events have not held the attention of the Western media. Since July 1983, the Sri Lankan government has exposed the Tamil minority to continuous and organised racial violence. Hundreds of Tamils were killed and are still being killed.

'Tamil property is being destroyed and hundreds of Tamils are being held in prisons without charge or trial. The security forces are being given a licence to kill as the government has brought in regulations to allow the police to dispose of bodies without any inquiry or inquest.

Opened fire

'As late as March of this year the Sri Lankan armed forces opened fire on the civilian population, men, women and children, in the Jaffna district, killing 12 Tamils and wounding over 50 others. These events get very little mention in our media, but the killing of one white woman in London more than a fortnight ago is still headline news.

'Such neglect by the media allows the Sri Lanka government to plan and execute the genocide of 2½ million Tamils in Sri Lanka virtually unnoticed by the rest of the world. Neither the West nor the East is willing to put pressure on President Jayewardene to stop the killings.

'The crime of genocide is not and cannot be an internal matter for the Sri Lankan government. The continuous violation of the human rights of a minority concerns us all; racial violence is a concern for humankind. Forty-five years ago the world stood by while Hitler was building the gas chambers to prepare his final solution to the Jewish problem. The world, both the West and the East, warned against fascism. It was concerned about persecution of the Jewish minority, but no one did anything about it and 6 million Jews perished. Today, 40 years later, the world displays the same latent racist ignorance about the persecution of 2½ million Tamils in Sri Lanka.

'It is true that our government has expressed its concern for the events that are taking place on that otherwise tranquil island. The action of the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (Mr West) to speed up family reunions for Sri Lankans is also commendable.

'However, immigration of Tamils is not the solution. Already there are more than 50,000 refugees even though the Tamils do not want to leave their homeland where they have lived for 3,000 years. Only the threat to their lives and property makes them flee and settle temporarily elsewhere. They do not want to abandon their homes and families. They are prepared to stay and fight for their dignity and for national self-determination.'

'I have discussed the plight of the Tamils with the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Hayden). I know that he is well briefed and concerned. However, our concern and its expression to the Sri Lankan government are not enough. We should use our good offices in international circles to raise our voice and concern so that international pressure is brought about on the Jayewardene government to stop the persecution of the Tamils in their own homeland and to bring those who committed atrocities to justice, according to law.'

Mr Hollis: (Macarthur): 'My grievance today is for the people of the island of Sri Lanka. I grieve especially for the Tamil community, but indeed, I grieve for all the people of the beautiful island, for violence inflicts its wounds on those who are the targets of violence as well as those who perpetrate it.

'There has been a long history of communal violence in Sri Lanka. The number of lives lost or the scale of destruction of property have not held the attention of the media in this country for very long. Part of the reason for this lack of interest is the way in which the outbreaks are covered. They have been reported, whenever this was possible, using local news sources, tourist accounts and the censored writings of a handful of foreign correspondents.

'These reports have not been distinguished by detailed investigation of causes, confirmation of the facts by independent inquiry or any of the other qualities that Western journalism has aspired to in recent decades.

'Sri Lanka has experienced many episodes of bloodbaths. There was a bloodbath in 1958, 1965, 1971, 1977 and 1981. In July 1983 the Tamils in Sri Lanka were victims of the worst violence ever seen in the history of that country. In just over one week hundreds of Tamils were killed and tens of thousands made homeless. Homes and business establishments belonging to Tamils were burnt to the ground. Tamil political prisoners in maximum security jails were massacred, innocent Tamil civilians — men, women and children alike — were indiscriminately killed by racist hooligans, including Sinhala police and army personnel.

'Today the Sinhala government which stood by when Sinhala mobs took knives and torches to their Tamil neighbours is once again not only allowing passions to rise but also allowing Tamils to be murdered.

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'As a student of international law, I recognise the domestic jurisdiction principle. Article 2, paragraph 7 of the United Nations Charter I support, but no country, I suggest, can stand by and say nothing while genocide is carried out against a minority in a country. The question of the so-called terrorist is often raised. I refer here to the so-called Tamil Tigers.

'I condemn violence wherever it occurs, but let us get this matter into perspective. The Tigers are a group of only a couple of hundred young people. I put it to you Mr Speaker, that if you had seen members of your own family raped and murdered and your homes burned, you too would probably become a freedom fighter yourself.

'Of course, the Sri Lanka government regards every young Tamil as a terrorist. It arrests them just on suspicion and many have died mysteriously in detention. If the Tamils engage in some form of civil disobedience, the army goes beserk, entering Tamil areas, shooting into houses, burning houses, and in general, acting as an undisciplined mob.

'There have been many outrages against human rights in Sri Lanka and, unfortunataely, time does not permit me to go into the many documented details I have in my possession, but I draw this House's attention to one episode that happened last year when 53 political prisoners were massacred in prison.

'It hardly rated a mention in our local media. On 26 July, the day after the killings, the government stated that several hundred prisoners in the jail including reconvicted criminals, defying orders from prison officers, broke into the wards of detainees under the Terrorism Law, including those convicted, and attacked them. In the clash that ensued, 35 detainees and prisoners died. An inquiry was held on 26 July returning verdicts of homicide in all cases and directing the officer-in-charge to conduct further investigation.

'That outcome is unknown. But despite this official investigation, the very next day on 27 July, Tamil detainees were subject to a second attack and a further 18 were killed. Mr Speaker, I ask you, how could prisoners in a maximum security jail break into another part of the jail, armed with knives and other such things and cause the deaths of 53 innocent people? It really takes some believing that this could happen.

'Time does not permit me to go into all the details but I am particularly concerned at what is happening in the Jaffna area in the north of Sri Lanka where more communal violence is going on. At this stage, I commend the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (Mr West) for his sympathetic response on behalf of the Hawke Labour government to the plight of the detainees and the refugees caused by this communal violence last year. I personally saw the Minister, as I know other members did. We received a very sympathetic hearing and, of course, Australia took many of the refugees from this communal violence.

I believe, as I said before, that despite Article 2, paragraph 7, of the United Nations Charter, Australia has a role in regard to what is going on in Sri Lanka. We cannot stand idly by and see genocide being committed in this country.

NORTH–EAST DDCs DISOLVED

Colombo, June 25: The six District Development Councils of the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka were today dissolved under Emergency Regulations by Prime Minister R. Premadasa, using powers vested with him as Minister of Local Government.

It is to be recalled that all six Councils had a TULF majority and became defunct since August 1983 when the elected representatives of the Tamils were disenfranchised from their seats by the government for refusing to take the oath against separatism.

NO CELEBRATORY SONG

By CECIL RAJENDRA*

So long
as car-parks take
precedence over hospitals
Multi-storeyed hotels
over homes for people
Irrelevant factories
over the paddy-fields
of our daily sustenance

I shall
sing no celebratory song
no matter
how many suns go down
This tongue
will be of thistle & thorn
until they right the wrong

So long
as Law comes before Justice
the edifice before service
the payment before treatment
and appearance before essence
I shall sing no celebratory song

So long
as the poet is debased
and the businessman praised
and the realist rewarded
and the idealist denigrated

I shall
sing no celebratory song
no matter
now many suns go down
This tongue
will be of thistle & thorn
until they right the wrong

So long
as foreign investors
devastate our estate
and the voice of Capital
speaks louder than
the pleas of fishermen

So long
as blind bulldozers
are allowed unchecked
to gouge our landscape
and Multinationals
licenced to run
amuck across this land

I shall
sing no celebratory song

So long
as our rivers & streams
our beaches, our air
our oceans & trees
our birds, our fish
our butterflies & bees
are strangled, stifled
polluted, poisoned
crushed, condemned . . .
by lop-sided development

I shall
sing no celebratory song
no matter
how many suns go down
This tongue
will be of thistle & thorn
until they right the wrong

* Cecil Rajendra is Malaysia's most internationally acclaimed poet

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JAFFNA LIBRARY RISES FROM THE ASHES

The marauders of the Sri Lankan police burned down the Jaffna Public Library with its priceless collection of books and materials on June 1, 1981.

On June 4 1984, the first stage of the rebuilt library was declared open by the Tamil United Front leader, Mr A. Amirthalingam.

The commemorative souvenir issued by the Jaffna Public Library to mark the opening of the rehabilitated building on June 4th was in every way worthy of the occasion.

Besides carrying messages from a number of persons of repute, there were a number of very informative articles in English and Tamil on Jaffna, its people and their culture.

To quote from the preface, 'The movement for a free public library in Jaffna came in the wake of universal franchise (1931) and the man behind it was Mr K.M. Chellappah. It became the town's library in 1935, when the urban council came forward to run the library.

After Independence, the city got municipal status and the first mayor, Mr Sam A. Sabapathy, secured the approval of the Municipal Council to construct a specially designed library building. The noted Indian architect Narasimhan designed the building in Dravidian style, and the first stage of the new edifice was completed and occupied in 1959.

A grateful people remember Fr J.M.F. Long, the Indian High Commissioner and the Asia Foundation as among those who helped to make their dream a reality . . .

'It was 1st June 1981 and the still hours of the night when this priceless collection, which was the repository of a great human culture in our country, was turned to ashes, and a building, which was the architectural pride of the North, damaged.

'It is, however, something to be thankful for that both within the shores of Sri Lanka and in lands beyond these shores it was realised that this was not just a loss to learning among the Tamils of the North, but a deep dent in the country's intellectual system and a loss, too, to the international community of learning.

Reconstructing

'So they did not send to find for whom the bell tolled. Instead, institutions and groups the world over rallied round to help in reconstructing the library, restoring its shelves and restocking its books . . .'

A tribute has also been paid by the publishers of the souvenir to one of Sri Lanka's distinguished librarians and an author of books, H.A.I. Goonetileke, who accepted the then Mayor's invitation to visit Jaffna in mid-1982, and make interim suggestions. It was on his recommendation that the necesary repairs to the North wing were carried out and four sectional services started.

The souvenir committee comprised Mr K. Nesiah (Chairman), Rev. Fr. Francis Joseph, Mr N. Mylvaganam, Mr N. Nadesan, Mr C.V.K. Sivagnanam (Municipal Commissioner and Chairman of the Library Committee) and Mrs Ropawathy Nadarajah (Secretary).

ANOTHER LANDMARK GUTTED!

The majestic building housing the Headquarters of the Jaffna Co-operative Stores that stood opposite the Jaffna General Hospital was demolished as a result of arson committed by the Sri Lankan security forces during the recent outbreak of violence in the North.

Such acts of violence have now become common occurrence in areas regarded as the traditional homelands of the Tamil people.

There appears to be a pattern in the selection of targets from time to time, for destruction. After demolishing the Jaffna Public Library a few years ago, the destructive forces turned their fury towards the only welfare institution in the mercantile sector — the Jaffna Co-ops — in this part of the country, both of which are proud possessions of the Tamil people.

The damage caused is colossal. The stocks of the company amounting to several millions were burnt down, not to mention the destruction of the fleet of vehicles, valuable machinery and other fixed assets, in the process.

This devastation has caused untold hardship to the large numbers of employees who look up to this institution for their livelihood.

Non-profiteering

The Jaffna Co-operative Stores has a character of its own which distinguishes it from other mercantile institutions. It was founded as early as in 1918 by a few leading residents of the Jaffna peninsula in order to cater to the crying need for a non-profiteering and comprehensive mercantile institution in Jaffna.

The company that started with a capital of Rs.8,000/- and six employees grew up to a position of eminence with 230 employees and seven branches. The turnover of the company for the year ended 31 March 1983 was Rs.128.5 million. 'Service before self' was its motto and it lived up to this ideal all along, giving justifiable pride to the Tamil people.

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Jaffna Co-operative Stores

It served right along as an unofficial price controller and helped in the stabilisation of prices at reasonable levels in the market. As such, the institution came to be respected for its high level of business ethics and the manner in which it served the community at large.

Served the community

Welfare institutions of this nature could never go extinct. Those responsible for the attempt to destroy it are bound to get disappointed. Sooner or later, it will rise like the 'Phoenix from the Ashes' to heights unattainable before.

It is heartening to note that in spite of the terrible set-back caused, the business of the company had been quickly resumed, making use of alternative premises in close proximity to the destroyed headquarters and the patrons of the company were continuing to give their unstinting co-operation and active support.

The Board of Directors are appealing to the shareholders and well-wishers, especially those living abroad, to invest monies in the company by way of deposits earning interest at 24 per cent, in order to enhance the cash flow of the business.

Considering the standing of the institution and the service it has been rendering to the Tamil community, it is hoped that their appeal will receive the support that it richly deserves.

TRIBUNAL TO PROBE INTO ETHNIC VIOLENCE IN SRI LANKA MOOTED

The Organisation for the Protection of Human Rights in Sri Lanka is thinking of setting up a tribunal to enquire into the happenings in the island during the past two years, with special reference to the events of July 1983.

Disclosing this to newsmen in Madras on July 8, the Organisation's president, Mr V.R. Krishna Iyer, former Judge of the Supreme Court, said the tribunal would have three or five members — outstanding public figures from India and abroad, to be selected soon. The tribunal would gather evidence from the victims, if the Sri Lanka government gave permission, or else meet the refugees in India and other countries.

Main Objective

This was one of the steps to be taken by the organisation whose main objective was to mobilise international opinion against the violation of human rights in Sri Lanka.

Mr Krishna Iyer said: 'We are now satisfied that Mr Jayawardene is not the safest custodian of Tamils' human rights and on the other hand, he is organising an effective annihilation of their human rights by military action and Sinhalese chauvinism.

'Sri Lanka is internationalising its own terrorist apparatus by allowing the entry of the Israeli Mossad, the British SAS and letting the US use the Trincomalee waters with a view to suppressing and even wiping out the Tamils in the island.'

He said these developments and the sequence of events in the island, especially the 'innovative torture of prisoners to extract confessions', smacked of the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea.

JAYAWARDENE THREATENS MUSLIMS

'If there are any Muslims in the party talking or acting against the policy of the government to establish relations with Israel and obtain its assistance, they should leave the party. Otherwise, they will be expelled.' This was the substance of a speech delivered by President Jayawardene to the annual meeting of the National Executive Committee of the ruling United National Party held recently.

'Promising stern action against all those who campaigned against the government's decision to obtain Israeli advisers, Mr Jayawardene threatened a repetition of July 1983 if this campaign continued. He said that the police had to open fire and declare a curfew in the Eastern province because of demonstrations staged protesting against the government's action.

'Create trouble'

In Colombo too there were some attempts made to create trouble. It was some Muslims who were responsible for this campaign. Some Tamils and newspapers were also helping, said Mr Jayawardene.

Criticising some newspapers for supporting this campaign, Mr Jayawardene said, 'I have warned them to stop this. Otherwise, these newspapers would have to be closed down.' He added, 'a country can exist without newspapers but cannot exist without a government'.

'If the Tamils and Muslims create trouble, it is the Sinhalese who will suffer. If there are elements who act in such a manner as to push the Sinhalese into the sea, this government will not allow it. I do not like to be the head of a government if the future of the Sinhala race is threatened,' Mr Jayawardene declared.

A Muslim Minister in Jayawardene's Cabinet, who did not want to be identified, said: 'The President is not concerned about our feelings on the question of re-establishing relations with Israel. The Muslims have always supported the UNP, but now he is threatening to expel us when we express our feelings.

'He has made it clear that he is a Sinhalese President for the Sinhala people. The UNP has become a party of the Sinhalese, by the Sinhalese and for the Sinhalese. We are paying the penalty for supporting the UNP.'

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ANTI-TAMIL POGROM — JULY 1983

State pogrom against Tamils

Mass murder in Sri Lanka

Beirut echoes for the Tamils in torment

Anti-Tamil riots claim more dead

33 killed in fresh Colombo violence

Army on rampage in Lanka, over 300 gunned down

SECOND SLAUGHTER OF TAMILS IN COLOMBO JAIL

Britons flee as army goes berserk

Britons tell of holiday terror in Sri Lanka

BRITISH TAMILS MOURN

Who will help the Tamils?

Colombo acts to appease mobs

Colombo rioting wrecks 20,000 Tamil businesses

TRAIL OF DEATH SPREADS

Tragic cargo aboard 'Train of Tears'

Tamil homes in Colombo set on fire

37 die in Colombo prison attack

Army 'took part in killings'

17 more inmates killed in Walikada jail

TORTURE OF TAMILS

Sri Lanka: Island of terror

Troops killed many in Jaffna much before riots

Racism in Sri Lanka

BLOOD IN THE STREETS

Sri Lanka forces Red Cross men to leave

37 TAMIL PRISONERS MASSACRED IN JAIL

Tormenting the Tamils

The Guardian ★ Daily Mail ★ Evening Standard ★ The Times ★ Daily Telegraph ★ New Statesman ★ Gulf Mirror

★ The Gazette, Montreal ★ Observer ★ Hindustan Times ★ The Scotsman ★ News Today ★ L

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HOW THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA REPORTED

Colombo burns

TAMILS TELL THEIR STORY OF MASSACRE
Armed forces abetted Sinhalese arsonists

Mayhem in Paradise

ARMY ON THE KILL

2,000 'may have died in Sri Lanka'

BLOOD STAINS THE EMERALD ISLE

Sri Lanka admits murder by troops

50,000 refugees flee from Sri Lankan riot horror

'Licence to kill' in Sri Lanka

THUGS LET LOOSE

Blood is running in the streets of Serendipity

Tourists see nine Tamils burned

Tamil youths set on fire

Killings continue despite curfew in Sri Lanka

30 feared dead in Colombo hysteria

1m Tamils prepare to flee

Eyes 'gouged out' in Sri Lankan gaol

Sri Lanka violence spreads to Kandy and Trincomalee

More Are Slain as Sri Lankan Rioting Spreads From Capital to Central Hills

Sri Lanka expels reporter for censorship violations

Colombo rioters on killing spree

Hill town scarred by orgy of violence

Sri Lanka's bloody shame

★ Times of India ★ Blitz ★ Deccan Herald ★ New York Times ★ Wall Street Journal ★ The Hindu ★ Sunday Times ★ Globe & Mail ★

Monde ★ Malay Mail ★ New Straits Times ★ India Today ★ News Line ★ Herald Tribune

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CENTURY OF ETHNIC CONFLICT (Part II)

ETHNIC SOLIDARITY AMONG THE WORKING CLASS (1890-1930)

By Kumari Jayawardene

These articles are based on a paper presented to a seminar of the Social Scientists Association and the Institute of Social Studies (The Hague) by Dr Kumari Jayawardena, Associate Professor, Colombo University, in December 1983. Reproduced by courtesy of the LANKA GUARDIAN.

Continued from last issue

The first part of this article dealt with the divisive consequences of ethnic and religious consciousness. There were, however, important periods in the labour history of Sri Lanka when class consciousness took precedence over ethnic and religious emotions.

The working class of the island, which had developed in the wake of plantation capitalism in the 19th century, was composed of all ethnic groups in the population — Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Tamils, Indian Tamils, Malayalis, Moors, Malays, Burghers and Eurasians: workers also belonged to various religions (Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and Hinduism), and in the case of the Sinhalese, Tamils and Malayalis, caste differences prevailed.

However, a consciousness of belonging to a class, of being subject to a class, of being subject in common to an oppressive system of low wages, long working hours and harsh conditions of work, together with an awareness that, as exploited workers, they had to organise and struggle for the improvement of their conditions, had already developed among the Sri Lanka urban workers by the late 19th century.

Such conscious joint action by labour against capital in colonial Sri Lanka, was a remarkable feature of the forty years between the first strike in the 1890s and the economic depression of the early 1930s. This was a period when, in spite of the current of chauvinist propaganda that was popular from the 1880s onwards, the workers were able to rise above caste, religious and ethnic divisions in the struggle for economic demands and economic rights. Moreover, the economic and political challenge of the Sri Lanka working class to British employers and officials historically preceded the agitation of the middle class nationalists, and also proved to be far more militant.

Early class struggles

Frederick Engels, at a reception in Vienna on September 14th, 1893, honouring his fifty years in the workers' movement, declared that the best reward for his endeavours was the knowledge that the movement had spread to the four corners of the earth — 'from the jails of Siberia and the gold mines of California to far-off places like Australia'.

He could have added Sri Lanka, for as he was speaking, the first 'flash of consciousness' among the Colombo workers had occurred; on September 12th 1893, sixty printers from the British firm of H.W. Cave, went on strike for five days over a delay in wage payments. During the strike, a public meeting of five hundred workers (mostly from the newspapers and other presses in Colombo) was held, at which the country's first trade union — the Ceylon Printers Union — was formed. Two hundred printers jointed the union and a resolution was passed, urging other workers to form trade unions.

Although the movement did not gain momentum, it marked the earliest expression of class activity by the printers, who were an advanced section of the workers. They belonged to different ethnic groups — Sinhalese, Tamils and Burghers — and were involved in printing in three languages. The leadership of the printers' union was also multi-ethnic; the President was a Goan (Dr. Lisboa-Pinto), the Secretary a Burgher (A.E. Buultjens) and the committee members were of diverse communities, many being Buddhist activists like Martinus Perera and C. Don Bastian.

Thus the first spark of working-class action was based on ethnic solidarity and it is significant that the union's motto was 'unity is strength' and that this slogan was prominently displaced at the inaugural meeting of the union.

There were several other strikes at the turn of the century, including laundry workers (1896), Jaffna Beedi workers (1896), Times of Ceylon printers (1898), and port workers (1901). But the most militant of these class actions was the strike in August 1906, when 5,000 Colombo carters (Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims), successfully struck work against vexatious new regulations of the Colombo Municipality. The carters' show of defiance, their ability to effectively establish control over the Pettah (the 'native' commercial quarter of Colombo) and their aggressive challenge to the police and to government officials, became a part of folk history, remembered for many decades.

At the time of the strike, the ethnic solidarity among the workers was commented upon in the pages of the *Ceylon Independent;* one letter praised 'the power of unity among the masses' and another signed 'anti-slavery' said, 'The carters' strike has supplied a splendid object lesson to all communities on the value of unity . . . **the carters . . . are men of various castes and creeds . . . but they left all religious and racial differences aside and combined most effectively'.**

However, it was the railway strike of 1912 which proved for the first time the potential power of the working class, through joint action, to cripple economic activity in the country. This strike of railway workers (Sinhalese, Tamil, Malayali and Burgher) for higher wages and other demands spread to the entire railway network of the country. Middle-class support was forthcoming from all communities; the Sinhalese temperance leaders of the period helped in the formation of the Railway Workers' Association and Ponnambalam Arunachalam, who was one of the commissioners appointed to report on the workers' grievances, wrote a dissenting report strongly supporting their claims for higher wages and commenting perceptively that 'Ceylon cannot expect to be untouched by the wave of discontent among the proletariat of the world'.

Arunachalam and the Labour Movement

Ponnambalam Arunachalam was a pioneer, not only of political and social reform, but also of labour organisations in Sri Lanka. He was one of the most gifted members of the colonial civil service and had wide contacts with Theosophists, British radicals, socialists and the British Labour Party. On his retirement in 1913, he

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emerged as the leading political figure of Sri Lanka, being elected the first President of the Ceylon National Congress in 1919. Unlike the moderate Sri Lanka leadership of the period, Arunachalam took a radical line on many issues, being especially forthright on questions affecting the working people.

He was far ahead of his colleagues in championing self-government and universal suffrage, and in 1917, writing of the World War, and the Russian Revolution, said, 'The only hopeful thing about the present war is the refusal of the Russian people to fight and I hope the common people of all countries will do likewise. In no other way will this slaughter cease, **unless you get together all the "statesmen" and capitalists and the rest of the ruling classes . . . and dispose of them somehow'.** It is therefore not surprising that he influenced the younger, more militant Sri Lanka nationalists — one of his keen followers being A. E. Goonesinha, the future trade union leader.

Arunachalam had always been active in championing labour; he had, through the Social Service League, constantly highlighted the iniquities of the Master and Servant Ordinance of 1865, under which plantation workers who left their estates could be charged in court for breach of contract and returned to their former employers. In 1916 he spoke out against the conditions on the plantations, stating that 'Being poor, ignorant and helpless (the worker was) unable to protect himself against the cupidity and tyranny of unscrupulous recruiters and bad employers'.

In 1919, the Ceylon Workers' Welfare League was formed with Arunachalam as President and Peri Sunderam, a Cambridge graduate of Indian Tamil origin, as Secretary. The Committee was a cross-section of professionals, Buddhist temperance leaders and journalists of many ethnic groups (Martinus Perera, K. Thiagarajah, Armand de Souza, C.H.Z. Fernando, Sam J.C. Kadirgamar, A.S. John and Dr I. David'.

In 1920, the League was transformed into the Ceylon Workers' Federation which was mainly composed of moderate elements. Arunachalam, however, continued to put forward a radical line and advocated the formation of trade unions. 'It is only by organisation that you can be strong . . . A dozen men . . . one by one are easily overcome, but if they join together and work together they are strong and difficult to overcome'; he urged the working class to 'make haste and form associations everywhere', and to resort to strike action when other methods failed. The Federation had around 5,000 skilled workers as members and also, for a time, attracted many younger activists like A.E. Goonesinha and George E. de Silva, who were later to lead the militant unionism of the 1920s.

It is important to record that the early nationalist political and reform movements united middle-class persons of all groups in common associations (the Social Reform Association — founded by Ananda Coomaraswamy, — the Social Service League, the Workers Welfare League, the Ceylon Workers Federation and the Ceylon National Congress).

But communal discord was already developing in the early 1920s; Arunachalam had disagreeements with the Congress and left the political field in 1923, and by 1927, the Sinhalese leadership in the Congress opposed universal franchise and stood out against franchise rights for Indian workers.

In contrast, the same period was the heyday of class and ethnic solidarity among the working class. Trade unions were organised among wide sections of the Colombo workers and joint action was taken on a basis of communal unity; in addition, the labour leaders of the period — most notably A.E. Goonesinha — championed universal suffrage and also supported the franchise rights of Indian workers in Sri Lanka.

A.E. Goonesinha and class struggle

The early struggles of the Colombo working class, without full-time leaders, were to pave the way for the organised class confrontations of the 1920s. In the years after the end of the First World War, there were food shortages and the consequent high prices led to agitation among railway, port, government factory and other workers in the public and private sectors.

An important joint activity of the period was the attempt, in 1919, to unionise the railway workers. This inaugural meeting of 700 workers was presided over by Armand de Souza, a leading journalist and political activist of Goan origin. It is interesting to note that the meeting was trilingual — C.H.Z. Fernando addressing the workers in Sinhalese, Peri Sunderam in Tamil and C.M. Jacob in Malayalam.

Agitation among many key sections of the working class increased in these years; in February 1920, there was a strike of railway workers all over the island, followed in March the same year by a successful strike of 5,000 Colombo port workers for wage increases. But it was in 1922, under the leadership of A.E. Goonesinha, a nationalist and social democrat, that the Ceylon Labour Union was formed, giving the working class its first full-time Union leader with a militant programme.

The first meeting of the Union was presided over by E.R. Tambimuttu, a member of the Legislative Council, who had earlier shown concern on labour issues. Soon after its formation, the new union succeeded in mobilising the Colombo workers and leading the country's first general strike, in February 1923, which lasted for three weeks. This strike of 20,000 workers of all sectors of the economy and all ethnic groups, was based on demands for long-delayed wage increases, which were eventually granted in 1925.

The general strike which was the greatest demonstration of power to that date by the working class, also produced its own leaders from different communities, including **'Hamban' William** and **'Yakha' John**, veterans of earlier railway strikes, **Kandasamy** of the Wellawatte Mills, and **Podisingho** of the Government Factory. The class unity of the Colombo workers was commented upon by Goonesinha, who referred to 'the wondrous manner in which the great masses of our artisan class have emerged from their age-long lethargy to vindicate their rights', adding that the 'political salvation of the country would come through the sincere efforts of our masses'.

A.E. Goonesinha, who came to national prominence in the 1923 strike, was able to give the Colombo workers a dynamic, militant leadership, championing trade union and other democratic rights and forming the most radical political wing of the Ceylon National Congress. He was able to command the loyal support of workers of minority communities during the great struggles of the 1920s and this was reinforced by his admiration for Gandhi and the leaders of the Indian national movement and his frequent visits to India.

The leadership of the Ceylon Labour Union in the twenties also reflected the multi-ethnic nature of the island's working class. Associated with the Union's activities with Sinhala leaders like Goonesinha, C.H.Z. Fernando, George E. de Silva and Victor Corea, were Sri Lanka Tamils, including **A.P.Thambiayah**, who formed a branch of the union in Jaffna and organised the Kayts port workers and **James Rutnam**, who in 1929 led a

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strike at the Nuwara Eliya Grand Motor Dept. The Union Vice-President was **K. Natesa Aiyar**, an Indian Tamil journalist who was a member of the Legislative Council, and other union leaders included Muslims such as **M.L.M. Reyal**, a Municipal Councillor, one of the union's forceful speakers and public speakers and **M.N.N. Haniffa** and **Cassim Ismail**, who were lawyers. The union leadership was also not confined to Buddhists, but included several Christians — (C.H.Z. Fernando, Valentine Perera, Victor Corea and James Rutnam). When, under A.E. Goonesinha's leadership, the Ceylon Labour Party was formed in 1928, the Executive Committee was composed of many Sinhalese and Tamil persons, the latter including A. Mahadeva, Dr Muttiah and Mr & Mrs Satiyawagiswara Iyer.

In 1928, the All Ceylon Trades Union Congress was also formed, with officials from all ethnic groups. At the first sessions, A. E. Goonesinha, while attacking the Ceylon National Congress leadership as 'designing politicians and pestferous adventurers', deplored the condition of the working class as 'degraded and degrading' and called upon the newly formed Trade Union Congress to 'free workers from their misery'. What is particularly worthy of emphasis is that he also laid great stress on the solidarity of the working class of all countries, extended fraternal greetings to many foreign labour organisations, including the Indian trade union movement, and aserted that the labour movement knew no differences of 'caste, colour or creed'.

Class consciousness and militancy

One of the Ceylon Labour Union's biggest trade union successes of the 1920s was the port strike of 1927, when ethnic solidarity proved to be a key factor in the struggle. The port workers consisted of Sinhalese, Tamils and Malayalis — the minorities forming a large proportion of the unskilled labour force. The 13,000 strikers, who held out for three weeks, demanded wage increases; they were supported by donations of money and food from other sections of the working class and on this occasion, workers brought from India as 'blacklegs' refused to replace the strikers.

The commercial life of the country was affected adversely by the strike and the government was forced to resort to arbitration, as a result of which the workers gained significant wage increases and more time off for meals. The victory was marked by spectacular meetings, demonstrations and processions in the city, in which workers carrying red flags were joined by dancers, drummerss and red-shirted volunteers. The ethnic unity on this occasion was also strengthened by the support of **K. Natesa Aiyer**, who even urged that the strike be extended to domestic and hotel workers to 'teach the man a lesson'. Natesa Aiyer also obtained support from Indian traders and shopkeepers, from whom he collected rice for the strikers, and in the Legislative Council, he raised the issue and urged the government to grant the wage increases demanded.

Solidarity on an international level was also forthcoming during this event; the Australian crew of the 'Jervis Bay', which was in Colombo port during the strike, refused to work for higher pay and visited the Labour Union office to show their support and make contributions to the strike fund.

At a reception for the crew on their return journey to Sri Lanka, A.E. Goonesinha, stated that their support of the strike was a rare instance of practical sympathy and solidarity between Asian and white workers; the purpose of the reception he added, was to instill into minds of the workers of Sri Lanka 'that black and white labourers all belonged to one great fraternity of labour'.

There were many other successful strikes in the mid-twenties, which was a period of economic boom, the prices of the main exports of the country reaching record figures around 1926. However, the climax of this militant phase of the 1920s was the strike of 150 tramway workers of Boustard Brothers, which occurred in February 1929. The workers, who again were of all ethnic groups, were supported in their struggle by the rest of the Colombo working class, who picketed the trams; in addition, the port workers refused to handle the produce of Boustards, who were also in the export and import trade.

The strike had begun as a demand for wages, leave and overtime among a small group of workers but it escalated into the most violent class confrontation to that date. There were street battles, rioting and stoppages by workers in the railways, harbour, government factory and private firms who descended into the streets. According to the police, 'scenes of the wildest disorder' occurred when buildings and gas installations near the Maradana Police Station were set on fire, resulting in police firing which killed 5 and injured 250.

Describing this strike, Philip Gunewardena, (a Left leader of the following decade), stated that 'The workers rose to an extraordinary pitch of revolutionary enthusiasm and sacrifice to defend their class interests and smash the symbol of capitalist authority and displayed rare initiative and ability to cope with a critical situation'; he further claimed that the strike weapon was 'the manifestation of the class struggle at a fairly acute stage', and showed how the tramway strikers 'who (were) not interested in the law and order of capitalist society' were not only able to 'put out of commission the authority of the decadent capitalist society', but also to challenge 'the armed forces of the mightiest empire the world has ever seen'. But this unparalleled display of class militancy in Sri Lanka was to prove the last important occasion, for many years, of ethnic solidarity and working-class unity.

In the years following the historic tramways strike, the working-class leadership was to take the Sinhalese workers on the path of communal antagonism and ethnic conflict;' however, one has to give credit to the leaders of the period up to 1929, for their non-communal positions, for as Neil Kuruppu has written:

'It is to the eternal credit of Goonesinha that for a while he was able to unite and organise under one banner, a large number of workers, including important sections in the harbour and railways . . . and so for a time, Sinhala and Indian workers joined hands to fight for their rights and better working conditions . . .' ('Communalism and the Labour Movement' in **Ethnicity and Social Change in Sri Lanka**, Social Scientists Association, 1984.)

The forty years of class solidarity among the Sinhalese and minority workers needs to be highlighted and commemorated. Today, when the labour movement is going through a phase of false consciousness, and is being aroused and misdirected by ethnic passions, the earlier period of rational class conscious activity serves as a lesson and an inspiration. In this connection, one has to give credit not only to the leaders of the early strikes, but also to those oppressed and exploited sections of Sri Lanka society who jointly participated, irrespective of ethnic, religious or caste barriers, in the important struggles of the early years of the labour movement, against both capital and the colonial state.

To be continued with

The Anti-Malayali Agitation 1930s

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MEDIA FILE

A CITY OF FEAR SLOWLY DYING IN SRI LANKA

As darkness falls over Jaffna, the 118,000 people living in the Tamil capital of Sri Lanka suddenly vanish indoors, leaving just the occasional army patrol to rumble through the streets.

Jaffna is a city of fear — a product of the enmity and bitterness between 11 million Sinhalese living in the tear-shaped island and 2,600,000 Tamils.

What causes the fear is itself the subject of contention between the two communities, which are said to have lost since Independence in 1948 more than 2,000 lives in racial bloodshed.

The Sinhalese-dominated government in Colombo cites the reign of terror waged by Tamil guerrillas since 1975. The Tamils who live in Jaffna blame the 'state terrorism' by government troops.

To most visitors the only conclusion they can reach is that the two communities have difficulty in reaching an accommodation about anything, let alone solving the terror that stalks Jaffna and Tamil areas of the north-ern-eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.

While the generations-old bickering continues, the city itself is slowly dying. Its young men are either fleeing abroad or are joining one of the five guerrilla groups based in Tamil Nadu in southern India, only 18 miles away across the Palk Strait.

The guerrillas, whom the government describes as 'Marxist terrorists', say they are fighting for a separate Tamil state to end the discrimination from which they suffer in education, university places, and job opportunities.

Separatism to the government and the Sinhalese majority means a prospect of communism, more interference from Tamil Nadu with its population of 50 million Tamils just over the water, and subsequent loss of their own nationality.

The rivalry between the two communities led to street fighting in Colombo a year ago that left 400 people, mostly Tamils, dead,and 100,000 refugees fleeing to the northern province dominated by the Jaffna peninsula.

It was also the reason for President Junious Jayawardene of Sri Lanka visiting New Delhi at the weekend for talks with Mrs Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, and for the government engaging a team of former Special Air Service soldiers and seeking anti-guerrilla assistance from Mossad, the Israeli secret service.

Until a year ago there was a daily flight to and from Colombo for Tamil businessmen in Jaffna with factories and offices in the capital.

Now, with so many Tamils having fled north, there is only a five-seater Cessna making two trips a week, and last Friday there was only one passenger.

In the centre of Jaffna the west wing of the white-domed public library is charred and gutted — left as a reminder of the night of June 11 1981, when police burned the building with the loss of some 97,000 books, includ-

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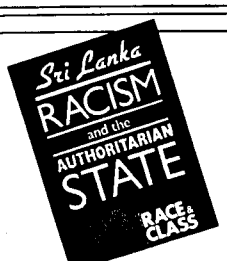

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NOW — JAYAWARDENE GOVT. AMBUSHED IN THE SOUTH!

The last few weeks have seen a fresh wave of violence, qualitatively different to the existing pattern, being reported from Sri Lanka, still reeling under the concussion of the trauma of July 83.

The guns of the armed services, forever levelled at the Tamil youth, turned a full 180 degrees to kill a few Sinhalese undergrads and injure many.

What erupted as a private feud between merry-making medical students at Peradeniya and the police, escalated into a full-scale battle between the trigger-hungry boys of President Jayawardene and the entire campus population of Sri Lanka.

All the campuses in Sri Lanka were closed down by the government. This resulted in the college students of Colombo (battle-scarred veterans of last year's pogrom against the Tamils), taking to the streets in an orgy of violence directed at government property and buses.

The Tamil undergraduates from the Jaffna campus, whose Tamil colleagues had been assaulted and driven away from the Peradeniya campus by Sinhalese students just before the July 83 pogrom, took a principled stand and demonstrated against the injustice perpetrated on their Sinhalese brethren in the South.

In the wake of this skirmish, hundreds of Sinhalese undergraduates, including several Buddhist monks, were arrested and detained by the government. Sri Lanka's 'War Minister', Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, was quick to claim that the campus troublemakers in the South had clandestine connections with the Northern 'terrorists'.

Before the echoes of the shots fired in this commotion could die down, a bomb explosion ripped the sixth floor of Hotel Lanka Oberoi, a five-star hotel in the heart of Colombo, killing a stewardess. It was said to be a note of warning for a key member of the Israeli intelligence unit, Mossad, now in Sri Lanka. Within a few hours of this explosion, security services claimed to have discovered a more powerful bomb in the building housing Minister Athulathmudali's Ministry of Internal Security and diffused it.

Attacked

Within a few days, two police stations in the Sinhala districts of Polonarruwa and Amparai had been attacked by armed youth, who injured several policemen and made good with the arms and ammunition in those stations.

Almost simultaneously, Education Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe disclosed that handbills exhorting Sinhalese people to violence against the government had been distributed at Anuradhapura, the ancient Sinhalese capital of Sri Lanka. 'Terrorism in the North, Let's start in the South', 'Rise to destroy the government that killed our students', they had read.

A few days later, in the southern coastal town of Tissamaharama, five Sinhalese youth had set fire to the building housing the Magistrate's Court and completely destroyed it.

At the time of going to press, there are unconfirmed reports of more police stations in the Sinhalese areas being attacked by youth. The armed services have been placed on an island-wide alert.

DR RAJASUNDARAM

FROM PAGE 1

is invidious to particularise in such a sea of murder — must be the killing of Dr Rajasundaram, the Secretary of the Gandhiyam movement.

I was proud to regard him as a friend, and will never forget him. For a believer in non-violence and the relief of the needy to be beaten to death in his cell by convicts, assisted by the security forces, is the reward in today's Sri Lanka, so it seems, for a man who deserved the world's greatest honours for his prodigious effort of rehabilitation and resettlement of the Tamil plantation refugees. The Sinhalese state claimed that he, like the noble Catholic priests whom I saw brought to trial in Colombo, was secretly in league with the Tigers; but so, too, are millions of other Tamils, inside and outside Sri Lanka.

Rather, he deserves to be remembered as a great and tireless fighter for the most downtrodden of the world's workers; a man of energy and dedication whose achievements dwarf those of his persecutors. After all, there is nothing positive for which Sri Lankan history will remember President Jayawardene, or Cyril Matthew or the warders of Welikade. But for men like Rajasundaram there will always be a memorial, always honour; the honour of being remembered with respect and affection by those whom he aided.

(From 'Sri Lankan Rulers Damned in the Eyes of the World', by Dr David Selbourne, *Tamil Times*, July 1983

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

ing many priceless Tamil manuscripts.

At the end of Mahatma Gandhi Road are the charred remains of the Jaffna Co-operative store, which, Tamils say, was burned down by some of the 3,000 troops based in the peninsula on the night of April 9 this year.

Nearby are burned-out shops — army retaliation, say Tamils, for guerrilla attacks. The army says the terrorists were responsible.

According to official figures, since July 1975, when Mr Alfred Duraiappa, mayor of Jaffna, was assassinated by terrorists, at least 50 members of the security forces, 11 politicians, 13 police informants, and 16 civilians have been killed.

Between May 16 and June 16 a further three policemen, seven suspected police informants, and a government official were murdered by guerrillas and there were 35 armed gang robberies in the northern and eastern provinces.

However, Mr Ramalingham Balasubramaniam, a lawyer, who is secretary of the Jaffna Citizens Committee, claimed there were hundreds of cases of civilians being arrested and tortured by security forces.

He claimed that between April 9 –12 this year at least 67 people were shot dead, 17 went missing, and 47 needed hospital treatment after the army went on the rampage following the ambush of a military convoy in Hospital Road, Jaffna.

Mr Balasubramaniam said: 'Those are the figures about which I have had information. Many more could have been killed and their bodies burned. I simply don't know.'

After a hard day of talks yesterday President Jayawardene of Sri Lanka is to meet Mrs Gandhi again in New Delhi today before flying home.

By courtesy DAILY TELEGRAPH (London) 2.7.84.

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NEVER CONQUERED!

Political honesty was hardly a commodity for which President Jayawardene was well-known. But people understand him to be an educated man with a knowledge of the past history of Sri Lanka, from which he is often wont to quote during his long and rambling speeches.

However, when it suits him, he takes leave of his knowledge of history. Sri Lanka, except for brief interludes in its 2,000-year history, was never a united country. It was divided up among several kings ruling at the same time.

Even when the Portuguese arrived in the 16th century the country was divided into four kingdoms. It was the British, who, for the first time in modern history, united the whole country into a single administration unit in 1833. As a man of history, Jayawardene cannot be accused of ignorance of this historical fact.

Yet, in his much-commented five-minute TV broadcast on July 29 1983, after a week of ominous and menacing silence, during which murder, mayhem, rape, arson and plunder were stalking every street in Sri Lanka, President Jayawardene declared, 'Sri Lanka was a united country for 2,500 years'.

Even an infant of history knows that Sri Lanka was conquered in the past and ruled by foreign powers, including the South Indian kings, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British. The British ruled the whole country as one of their colonies for 150 years until they granted independence in 1948.

Yet the President, speaking at the State Department luncheon during his recent visit to the USA, is reported to have declared, 'WE HAVE NEVER BEEN CONQUERED, NOR EVER WILL BE . . .'

Falsification of history and the techniques of doublethink and doublespeak have been developed into a popular art form in Sri Lanka by the President and his men.

SAI SWARUPINI ARANGETRAM

Sai Swarupini, nine-year-old daughter of Dr and Mrs Kathirgamathamby and pupil of Girija Varothayasingham of Nadana Brahman, London, delighted a packed and appreciative audience of friends and well-wishers at her Bharatha Natya Arangetram at Lord Mountbatten Hall, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, London, W14, on Saturday, 7th July 1984.

The performance included an expertly executed Peacock Dance in addition to the traditional components of a Bharatha Natiya sequence. Sai Swarupini displayed effortless grace and stamina inspired by dedication to this art form and brought glory and justifiable pride to her Guru and parents.

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Obituary

Mr A.R. ASIRWATHAM

The death occurred after a brief illness on 11th July 1984 of Mr A.R. Asirwatham, solicitor and tireless fighter for Tamil causes. He would be best remembered for his work as the General Secretary of the Government Clerical Service Union in Sri Lanka. Before coming to Britain in 1971, he practised as a proctor in Nuwara-Eliya, Colombo and Chavakachcheri. He leaves behind his widow Helen and four children, Dharsini, Nirmala, Rano and Mino.

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FROM PAGE 2

Sinhala terrorism', and to maintain his despotic, corrupt and bankrupt regime in power. The racist drug that is daily dished out through the state-controlled media thus keeping the anti-Tamil pot always at the boil, seems to be fast losing its potency.

As far as the Tamil people are concerned, in marking the first anniversary of the July 1983 pogrom, we declare and tell Mr Jayawardene and his despotic regime and the world at large that the Tamil people's decision to free themselves from the oppression of the Sri Lankan state is irrevocable and irreversible. Mr Jayawardene may get all the arms he desires. That will not frighten the Tamil people. He may obtain the disreputable services of SAS mercenaries. That will not deflect the Tamil people. He can bring in the murderous Mossad. That will not mitigate the determination of the Tamil people.

History is replete with lessons which Jayawardene and his despotic reigme should learn and learn quickly. Not long ago, the Vietnamese people taught the lesson that no amount of military might could contain the detonation of the will of a nation to be free — a lesson which Uncle Sam took two decades and more to learn at enormous cost, and which lesson Uncle Dick or his successors will eventuallly be forced to learn at a colossal cost to themselves, for the Tamil Nation is resolved to be free, and free they shall be.

'HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED', visiting Conservative & Labour MPs say

Colombo, June 7: A delegation of British Members of Parliament from both Conservative and Labour Parties, who visited Sri Lanka at the request of the Sri Lankan government, have not allowed the hospitality of the hosts to get the better of their sense of justice and fair play and have delivered yet another demanding indictment on the despotic regime of President Jayawardene.

At a press conference held by the delegation at Hotel Lanka Oberoi today, chaired by Mr Michael Morris, Conservative MP and head of the delegation, the delegates declared that having toured the length and breadth of the North of Sri Lanka they felt that human rights had been violated in that region in recent times.

'If Tamil youth were engaged in terrorist activities it was essential to find out what drove them to do so and take remedial measures.'

FROM PAGE 7

to live with dignity amongst their fellow men;

d. to secure the civil and political rights of the Tamil people because the Tamil people seek to live in equality and freedom with their fellow men.

The Convention also resolved 'that the working group of the Tamil International be charged with the responsibility of taking the necessary steps to secure an independent and impartial inquiry by an international tribunal of jurists into the crimes of genocide and human rights violations against the Tamil people by the Sri Lankan government'.

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If you have difficulties with regard to the above, or require any guidance on immigration matters please contact us.

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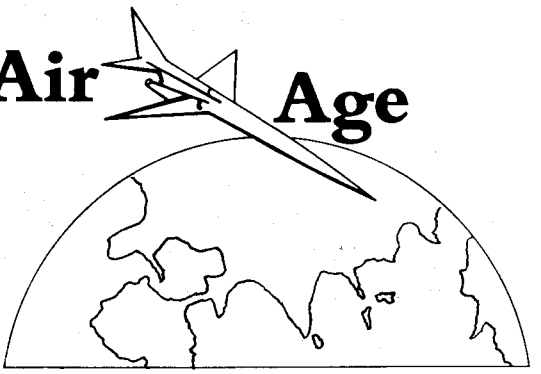

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